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## THE TRIBUNE.

THE STATE PRISON BILL. REMARKS OF MR. HUNTINGTON.

In the New-York Assembly, on the Bill in relation to State Prisons.

Reported for the Albany Evening Journal.

In Assembly, March 2. The bill for the erection of a new State Prison in the Iron region of the North being under consideration in Committee of the Whole, Mr. Con in the Chair, Mr. HUNTINGTON

addressed the Committee in substance as follows: MR. CHAIRMAN-I advise the Committee that introduce a dry narrative-one only out of a mul-I do not rise for the purpose of speaking against titude of similar import, which might be adduced : time, or to weary out the patience of the Com- Ten years since, a young man of gentlemanly mittee until they are compelled to leave their seats. manners, and prepossessing appearance and ad-As an humble advocate of the mechanics, I de- dress, applied to me for employment, which was sire to express my views upon this question. I given him. He soon became the favorite of all am happy, Mr. Chairman, that on this question the hands in the shop, but he attached himself no political strife has been agitated. The inter- more particularly to an apprentice 18 years old. ests of the State are at issue—its whole system of a poor friendless boy that I had received into my criminal jurisprudence is open for deliberation family when only nine years of age, and in whom and final action. I hope the Committee will re- my confidence was so great that I would have collect that I am but a mechanic. I come not entrusted him with untold gold. His fidelity was here to play the orator, but to give such informa- proverbial, and no man could have bought his tion as my own long experience in business has time of me for \$300. Well, sir, the villain that enabled me to treasure up, and to give such ad- in an evil hour I had admitted into my family, in vice to the Committee as I am able to youch for six months converted that boy into a drunkard, a the correctness of. I propose to submit some re- debauchee and a felon; and in less than nine marks on the peculiar hardships to which your months, as a consequence of his crimes, he was sive Legislatures to afford them relief.

20,000 petitioners, the Legislature appointed a select Committee to investigate their complaints and report to the next Legislature. A majority report from that Committee was made, adverse to the petitioners. The Legislature of 1835, But at length justice overtook him. His accomhowever, passed an act, forbidding the teaching plices betrayed him, and upon their's and other of new trades in the prisons, or any contracts to be made for the services of the convicts, except for the manufacture of such articles as were chiefly imported from abroad. Thus that Legislature fully, though tardily, admitted the justice of our claims. But, Mr. Chairman, did any benefits enure to the mechanics from the passage of that act? Not the least. Every provision of it designed for their benefit, was violated in the most open and unblushing manner by the officers of the prisons. This determination to defeat its object preceded its passage. While the law was pending in the Legislature, those contracts which had but a short time to run, were renewed for five years-thus completely neutralizing the beneficial effect of the law.

Many mechanics, disgusted with such perfidy, abandoned their business, and engaged, at great sacrifices, in pursuits for which they were unqualified, and to which they were utter strangers. whose veins the blood of 1775 flowed unadulterated. Another united effort in 1842 resulted in a full recognition of the justice of their complaints, by the Legislature of that year. A law was then passed, not repealing or modifying the law of 1834-not advisory of its provisions as stated by the gentleman from Cayuga, (Mr. Hall,) but mandatory and penal.

Mr. HALL: I said the law of 1842 altered the law of 1835-not that it was advisory of its pro-

Mr. Hunrington: I understood the gentleman to say advisory, and I commented upon the remark at the time. This law required the Attorney General to pass upon the validity of the then existing contracts. What an anomaly in Legislation was here presented! Rather let me say, what a broad farce was then enacted! For seven years, the Agents and Inspectors of the Prisons had sported with the interests of the Mechanics and sacreligiously trampled upon your statute book, and set your laws at defiance. Were they called to account, for this violation of your law? No, sir! Not the slightest murmur of disapprobation was heard, save from the Mechanics, whose complaints were unhecded. By those in authority, the offence was deemed too venal to deserve a comment. Nay, more, sir; when that bill was trade? Why not? They both work in metal! under consideration, it was gravely proposed by its opponents to throw the shield of Legislative protection over these violators of law and affirm the validity of these contracts! But the good sense and integrity of the majority revolted at | nish, and the cooper only preparing hoops. Insuch monstrous corruption, and the bill passed by | deed! And let me tell that gentleman, those

The Mechanics now fancied they had gained trades. And now, sir, if there is any virtue in the the acme of their wishes, and that the long sought law of 1842, I call upon the Attorney General relief would be realized. But, Mr. Chairman, to put it in force against the officers of the Aulet us mark the result, and bow to the glorious burn Prison. uncertainty of the law. We have seen that it was made by that act the duty of the Attorney-General, to pass upon the legality of the existing chanics, sir, were told, year after year, that the contracts. In the performance of that duty, the Legislature could afford no relief. They admit. major part of them were dissolved. Thus were ted the justice of our claims-they admitted that the complaints of the Mechanics fully justified. Thus-"O, tell it not in Gath"-the Empire State was adjudged by her highest law officer, to have been for seven consecutive years, engaged in robbing her own mechanics! But no sooner were the old contracts dissolved, than new ones were framed-the States losing in the operation about thirteen thousand dollars. In several instances, these new contracts were made with the old contractors, and by a fiction of law, the identical convicts, who had been instructed in violation of the law of 1835, were adjudged not to come within the prohibition of the act of 1842, and were once more placed at the disposal of their old masters. But to cap the climax and complete the absurdity, the Attorney-General man of science-whose report made to this Leoverlooking the indivisibility of Trades, as the term is legally and technically understood, decided, and that too, on an affidavit (the most exceptionable of all evidence)-and that affidavit procured at Sing-Sing, whether within or without the walls of the Prison, he has not informed this House, and without the aid of any statistics, relating to the manufacture of the article, that Brussels carpeting was chiefly imported from foreign countries, and therefore, the art might be taught in the Prisons. But what are the facts in the case? Why, sir, they are, that in 1842, we imported of Brussels, Wilton and Treble Ingrain Carpeting to the amount of \$208,895, while the domestic manufacture in the same year reached the enormous sum of \$2,262,520. Who will now doubt that the Attorney-General has acted a conspicuous part in this farce ? I mean not to impugn his motives. I state the fact and leave the committee to draw the inference. I believe the gentleman from Cayuga, (Mr. Hall,) suggested yesterday that but for a defect in the law, he might have been indicted; and I certainly quaintance with Chemistry, with Geology, and have no disposition to contest that question with with Mineralogy. He had a stock of information

ule gentleman An attempt had been made here and elsewhere, to depreciate the injury sustained by the mechanles from being obliged to compete with convict labor. The gentleman from Chautauque, (Mr. Simons) who, Parthian-like, launched his dart, and fled, without looking behind to see how innocent of injury his pointless weapon sped-scouthis business by this competition, or that he could ciations of this "visionary" project, deny their ty competence for the support of their families.—

BY GREELEY & McELRATH. OFFICE NO. 160 NASSAU-STREET.

VOL. III. NO. 286.

be contaminated in his morals or degraded in so-

ciety by associating with felons. But as the gen-

tleman offered no argument in support of his

opinion, I shall dismiss my notice of it, by briefly

remarking that I envy not that man his felicity

whose moral sensibilities have become so obtuse,

that he does not shun the approach of the guilty

"Vice is a monster of such frightful mien.

That to be hated needs but to be seen; But seen too off, familiar with her face, We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

testimony, he was indicted for a participation in

twelve distinct burglaries. Under the advice of

the presiding Judge, he was only tried upon three

of these charges, and was sentenced to the State

Prison for twenty-one years, and he has now ser-

ved out nine years of his apprenticeship. It after-

wards appeared that that man had served out one

term in the State Prison before he came into my

employment. This, sir, is but one of many like

In relation to the other part of the assertion of

the gentleman from Chautauque, (Mr. Simons) I

have only to ask gentlemen to turn to the authon-

tie statements which have been laid upon our

tables. If they do not demonstrate the utter

hopelessness of the contest on the part of the me-

chanics to compete with State Prison labor,

then may we well despair of ever producing con-

(Mr. Hall) deserves a passing notice from me .-The mechanics are under igfinite obligation to

that gentleman, for he has unlocked the Arcana,

and conducted this Committee into the inner

temple of prison corruption. He has portrayed

with the hand of a master the Jesuitical tricks-

the frauds and collusions understood and practis-

ed alike by officers and contractors-yes, sir, offi-

cers and contractors. That gentleman's author-

ity, sir, is unquestionable, for he too has been a

contractor. Common Fame asserts-we know,

sir, that Common Fame is celebrated for her men-

dacity-Common Fame asserts that he obtained

two thousand dollars for his contract. If she does

him injustice, I cheerfully give him an opportu-

But, Mr. Chairman, there is another point in

which the mechanics are indebted to the gentle-

man. By him the officers of the prison plead

guilty to their indictment, and he, as the apolo

gist of the defendants, offers various excuses in

mitigation of punishment. He admits the truth

put on the cabinet-maker's contract, but gravely

asks, are not cabinet-making and joinering the

same trades? They both work in wood! I will

not insult the intelligence of the committee by

arguing the point-I will only ask the gentleman,

are not casting cannon and watch-making one

But again, the mechanics charge that they found

two raw hands apprenticed to forbidden trades.

The gentleman admits it, but he tells you that the

cabinet-maker's man was only rubbing down var-

are the first steps in educating apprentices to these

I come now, Mr. Chairman, to another ques-

tion, and that is, the mode of relief. The me-

we ought to be relieved. But they told us no

measure could be adopted to effect that object .-

Yes, sir, the concentrated Legislative wisdom for

20 years could devise no mode of redress. The

mechanics have done it in two years. They have

presented you a plan, and, as they contend, an

effectual plan of relief; and what is now said to

us? We are told that it is asked to put our

hands in the State Treasury and draw out some

\$30,000! Sir, your State Prison system has

robbed enough from the mechanics, to build a

Prison in every section of the State, and shall

we be now told, the State cannot afford to give us

relief? Sir, there was a man, appointed under

an order of this House-a mechanic, sir, and a

gislature contains more practical wisdom than

the whole host of speculators in the regions of ab-

stractions, have ever put forth on this or any other

question. That report, sir, is worthy of all praise.

It needs not my humble endorsement. It has re-

Mr. STEVENS. Yes, and of the Assembly, too,

Mr. Huntington. Certainly. I trust, this

consideration will be sufficient to answer any in-

sinuations against the integrity of that gentle-

man (Ransom Cook) whom I now have in my

eye. Let me tell gentlemen, and I have the in-

formation from his own lips, that when urged by

the Secretary of State to undertake this mission,

it was with the greatest reluctance that he con-

sented. As proof of this, I am permitted to refer

to his correspondence with Col. Young. His re-

luctance arose from the fact that he had no faith

in the project. And why so! Because he be-

lieved it was not practical. But that man, sir,

was a man of science. He had a thorough ac-

in his possession, which only needed an opportu-

nity to bring out. That man, sir, without a par-

cated in his commission. No sooner had he sur-

for they passed a bill on its recommendation.

ceived that of all your State officers.

nity to correct the statement.

this sentiment from an eminent poet :-

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 9, 1844.

correctness. I am aware sir, that a few inter. Sir, as a means of deterring from crime, your preested individuals have contended that he was sent system has long been a jeer and a byeword. mistaken in some of his calculations. Be it so. At that visit, we were informed by the agents.

mates, the State could, from the labor of 500 con-

and shrink intuitively from the contaminating victs, realize a net profit of \$120,000 per annum! influence of vice. I hope, Mr. Chairman, the Committee will pardon me for an illustration of early part of my business life, in the vicinity of this Iron region, though upon the other side of Sir, it is said that facts are stubborn things .business of the manufacture of Iron, with its pro-Like the figures of the gentleman from Cayuga, fits, and with its details. A company was organ-(Mr. Hali) they are apt to be ugly customers .ized to carry on this business, headed by that Now, sir, in answer to gentlemen who pronounce prince of merchants, Col. Perkins of Boston so authoritatively upon a subject of which they When our commerce was locked up in our ports appear to be so profoundly ignorant, permit me to by the unrighteous acts of our enemies, these can furnish. Their means were almost exhaust. the crime only manslaughter, and he is accordless, and they used them with a lavish hand, as is characteristic of the business men of Boston. Sir, the merchants of that city are noted for their shrewdness and correct calculations. And for the forty-five years during which I have known them, prison system has subjected the mechanics, in summoned to the tribunal of his final Judge, ruin- the manufacture of Iron is an experiment. That reformation of the transgressor. What says the connection with the abortive attempts of succes- ed for time and for eternity. But, sir, this the project is visionary and will explode—that great Lawgiver of the Israel, whose acts are yet was not all. The work of the destroyer was not every dollar paid out of the Treasury for this pur. the very sum of human wisdom, when speaking In 1834, in answer to the prayer of more than yet accomplished. Two young and virtuous fe- pose will be sunk in misfortune and ruin. Sir, such results are not to be feared. I have recentmales, one the sister of the boy in question, the ly corresponded with the Agent of this companyother the daughter of a neighboring farmer, were a man of ability, and worthy of all confidence, seduced and ruined by this villain. He debauchand he tells me that that company manufacture vicinity, but every pound of which is transported

> the Boston market. Mr. D. LEE .- At what place did the gentle-

man say this company was located? Mr. Huntington .-- At Vergennes, Vermont, and it is known as the Boston Iron Company. I can mention another fact, to show that this project is not chimerical. A distinguished gentleman, whose name, perhaps, courtesy forbids me to mention, who has my entire confidence, informed me that the merchants of New-York were endcavoring to engross the entire product of the Iron manufacture on the northern frontier, not only for the past year, but for that to come. They ness? Suppose the States should only receive with more impunity, or suffer a less penalty.

not thus to be imposed upon. into the fire and welded. This process is repeat. and yet no sympathies are excited for the honest ed until an Iron is obtained of the value of the and industrious mechanics? your convicts have too much, rather than too

little intelligence. In this bill, a provision has been introduced for prison. But I do not believe such a provision necessary, and I was sorry to see it put into the some of their natural rights in order that they may be guarded from villains. Sir, I am disgusted by this sympathy for the poor villain—the kept at the manufacture of Iron. From my own kept at the manufacture of Iron. From my own kept at the manufacture of Iron. From my own kept at the manufacture of Iron. From my own kept at the men who have parted with some of their natural rights in order that they may be guarded from villains. Sir, I am disgusted by this sympathy for the poor villain—the poor murderer, and I am sorry it prevails so exvertly. See STENCER,

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When I visited Auburn, in company with a gentleman (Mr. True) whose name has been brought in here, and who, as the gentleman from Cayuga (Mr. Hall) says, acted as proxy for the Mechanics, (let me tell that gentleman that ga.) I found such a condition of the State Prisons ticle of faith in the project, went to the spot indievil doers. Such was the provision for their comfort, that any one could enjoy themselves-put at veyed that immense Iron region of the North, mild labor, and working two or three hours less than he became a convert to our views. His report is here, sir, and who will question it? His each day than the honest Mechanics outside of estimates, too, are before you, and I would like its walls were compelled to do, in order to compete with this State Prison labor, and earn a scanto see gentlemen, who are so free in their denun-

Yet out of their mouth will we condemn them. that nine per cent. of the prisoners sent there dur-The gentleman from Columbia (Mr. Carpenter) ing the last year, were then serving out their seshowed us yesterday, that upon their own esti- | cond or their third term. What is the inference from this? That your present Prison system deters from crime? If any one has doubts on this Sir, there is nothing illusory or deceptive about subject, let him refer to the daily intelligence fur. this subject. I profess to know something about | nished by the public press. No, sir; the villain it experimentally. I spent twelve years of the | who makes up his mind to rob his neighbor, makes | vides, it will prove a productive investment, up his account beforehand. He has been to State Prison before, and, like the villain to whom the lake. I am somewhat acquainted with the I have already alluded, who was in my employ, for \$1,500 he can afford to run the risk of a five years' term in the State Prison at Auburn. If to be attained. the worst comes, and he is detected and sent there, he knows that he will be well fed and clothed-be the inhabitant of a comfortable mansion, kept warm for him in winter, and nicely merchants employed a large part of their spare | cool in summer by the great thickness of its capital in the village-city it now is-where I | walls-that he will only have labor just enough then resided, Vergennes, Addison County. Ver. to give him a good appetite. In view of all this. mont. An extensive factory was established .- he says, I run but little hazard; I will make the The ore was brought from the mines across the experiment. And he, too, who wishes to glut his lake, where it is now proposed to employ these revenge upon his neighbor, and stabs him to the convicts. They manufactured the coarse and heart with the assassin's knife-he, too, will, by the refined Iron, they manufactured steel, and the mawkish sensibility of your Courts, be prothey also made the fine card wire, and in fact | nounced innocent on the ground that he is a mamanufactured almost every article, which Iron niac, or the law will be so tortured as to make

ingly sent to the State Prison. But gentlemen have contended here that our benevolence is concerned in this business-and that we are bound to make these convicts comfortable. Sir, such gentlemen show little know. I have never yet known them fail in any consid. ledge of the philosophy of the human mind. Peable enterprise. And yet we are told, sir, that nal statutes were never made with a view to the of the reason for the infliction of the punishment of Death? "That all the people may hear and fear and do so no more ferever." I will not cite you to the teachings of history, and take you through the classic walks of Greece and Rome No! I will appeal direct to the knowledge and conscience of every member on this floor. What through your canals and across the country to are the facts in the case? Has not crime increased of late years, ten-fold in aggravation and amount? and does this not prove that there is something "rotten in Denmark?"

Sir, what do the mechanics propose-what do they claim or expect as men mingling in your society? They ask that you shall put these men where they shall be compelled to work as hard as we do ourselves. And at a good healthy business, too-for the gentleman from Clinton, (Mr. Hub. bell) says there are no healthier people than the iron manufacturers. We ask that you shall put the atrocious felon who has waylaid his neighbor. or entered upon his premises, committing his dehave already advanced in price one-third, and of- predations, at such hard labor as when he shall fer \$55 per ton opon Lake Champlain. The larg- | come out of prison, he shall have no disposition est estimate for the cost of manufacturing Iron is to commit further depredations upon your citizens, \$42 per ton; and are there no profits in this busi. but will go either where he can play the villain

Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from Cayuga S42 per ton for its Iron? True, that would be The gentleman from Cayuga (Mr. HALL) has ruinous to the manufacturers thus brought into spoken to us of the cost of the two prisons already ble investment. It would be so, because your ing the attention of the committee to this subject. hands are now valueless. The last year they Sir, the prison at Auburn has, in my estimation, earned you but 11 cents per day—the rest was all cost the State nearer \$600,000 than either \$400. absorbed by your agents and the contractors .- | 000 or \$500,000. You have built not a prison And yet we are told that this is a chimerical pro. there, but a palace. The rogue, viewing its fine ject! Sir, I feel indignant at this insult. I trust exterior, will very natarally and justly conclude the House will prove by their votes that they are that the terrors within cannot be very great.-And will you enlarge this prison? Sir, it is not But sir, the State is not called upon to compete with the manufacturers of Iron at the North.— a debatable question whether you will build or not; that is settled. I tell these vigilant senti-The mechanics ask for no such thing. Though nels of the State Treasury that the money for a they have alone borne the load for 25 years, they new prison must come out of it. There is alreaask not to be relieved now by casting it upon the | dy not a spare cell in Auburn, and but very few shoulders of another class of our citizens. Sir, at Sing Sing. You must build, and our advice the statistics upon your tables, show that millions is given you in this bill. Sir, we are not the viof dollars are paid annually in Europe for Iron sionary schemers represented by gentlemen. Some which can as well be manufactured here. And, of us have grown old at our business, and it may let me tell gentlemen, that in this manufacture, perhaps be claimed that we have as much intelli-Great Britain cannot compete with us. She gets gence and practical knowledge as some other genall her Iron for her fine cutlery, &c. from Swe. | tlemen, who were in their cradles long after we of the charge, that the joiner and carpenter were den. She manufactures all her Iron with pit had toiled at our trades. It comes with a bad coal. It is the Railroad Iron which is sold for grace from such gentlemen to charge the 200,000 about \$25 per ton, while she pays \$160 for other | mechanics of your State as being visionary—as Iron which is imported from Sweden. Your being stirred up by politicians and greedy specu-Iron, sir, every pound of it, can be made of as lators. So large a class of your citizens, scatgood a quality as was ever brought from Sweden. tered from the Lakes to the Ocean, stirred up by The gentleman from Cayuga (Mr. Hall) told us such considerations? Was ever a more ridicuthe more labor there was expended upon the Iron lous pretence set up? Sir, it has been our own more valuable it became, and the less became the impulse which has moved us. We have suscost of transportation. It is so, sir. Junk Iron tained ourselves long, and, unless our grievances which brings \$8, when manufactured into bloom are redeemed, we shall seek our remedy through Iron is worth \$11. As I am a mechanic, per. the ballot-boxes. The mechanics, sir, are not the haps the committee will pardon me, if I describe violators of the law. How is it that the broad the mechanical process of making Iron. The mantle of charity is thrown over the felon, the Iron is hammered, then cut up into junks, put burglar, the murderer and the atrocious villain,

Swede's Iron. Now, sir, let the convicts make How is this? The present state of feeling is this Iron. They do not manufacture it at the the result of the operations of the policy of those Peru Works, for they cannot afford the cost of visionary men, who a few years since, gave out the necessary labor. But we, sir, have this labor that they were about to reform all the convicts in already in the market. And the more of our la- N. Y. They had found a Catholicon for every bor we expend upon the Iron, the less becomes vice that infested society. But experience, sir, the transportation. And it will command as has proved all this to be mere fallacy. Scarcely high a price as was ever paid for either the Swe- a paper comes to you which is not freighted with dish or the Russian. But it is said our convicts accounts of rapes, with murders, and with atrocannot manufacture Iron. Why do not gentle- cious crimes, until the community may well tremmen know that every pound of Russian Iron is ble. Our sympathies should be called out, not manufactured in the mines of Siberia by the for the villains, who are stamped by the law with convicts, exiled there? And are American con- infamy, but for those honest members of society, victs less intelligent than the Russian ? Sir, who have sunk some of their natural rights in the bonds which hold together society, that the laws of that society may protect them in the enjoyment of the rest. As wise Legislators we are bound to carry out the intent of that original com-

The gentleman from Cayuga (Mr. HALL) has treated us with an array of figures, to make out iron. When you come to the everlasting fires the Indebtedness of the Treasury for the Prisons beneath, and not before will you get to the bot- at Auburn and Sing Sing. As I have remarked before, the State has built palaces there, and it is now asked that you add to their splendor. Sir, the taste of the community is such that it would not do to ask the erection of rough buildings at the present localities of the Prisons. No! You must carry on the palaces as they have been begun. Why, sir, the doors in the Auburn Prison cost, as it appears from one of the Reports of a State Prison Committee, \$80 each. Sir, in the Prison which the mechanics advise you to erect, will undertake to build every door in it for \$15 each: make the comparison between \$15 and \$80, and you may continue the same through the whole of the structure, and a similar reduction may be made throughout. I am informed, and credibly too, that at the North, where it is proposed to erect this new prison, an abundance of among those Mechanics there are many who will stone, already quarried, may be obtained to erect among those Mechanics there are many who will stone, are addy quarter, may be obtained at this prison. Not hewn and polished stone as at favorably compare with many who have held sents on this floor from Cayuga or from Ononda. Auburn, but rough stone, with which and the sents on this floor from Cayuga or from Ononda. Auburn, but rough stone, with which and the styles of Harris & Farnum. KENTUCKY JEANS—100 cases medium and very fine and the styles of the State Prisons. labor of 500 convicts I would undertake, and as was little calculated to operate as a terror to could give you good security too, to erect the new

ready filled up with that sum, and that the Treasury is empty. Gentlemen need not fear. If this plan is adopted and carried into effect, not more than \$20,000 will probably be required this season—certainly not more than \$50,000. The mh12w Cliff, corner of John street.

WHOLE NO. 907. Committee of the Senate-if it is parliamentary to allude to the proceedings of that body-have reported that the prisons will fall short this year of paying their expenses some \$40,000 or \$50,000. and that the State will be called upon to supply that sum. Suppose then it does require the expenditure of \$50,000 this year towards this new prison, it will be no more than you will otherwise be called upon to supply the deficiency of income in the present prisons. If given as this bill proeventually returning an ample income to the State. But this consideration is only incident. You will by such action afford to mechanics that relief which they ask for, which is the great end

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